# 'Secret' Film on Plot

Los Angeles

Filming is under way here on a movie called "Executive Action" which deals with a conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy.

Starring Burt Lancaster, Robert Ryan and Will Geer, the movie will be released by National General Pictures before the end of the year, to coincide with the 10th anniversary of Kennedy's death on November 22. Edward Lewis ("Seven Days in May," "The Flyer") is the producer and David Miller ("Lonely Are the Brave") is directing from a screenplay by Dalton Trumbo, Donald Freed and Mark Lane.

Herbert Magidson, a Los Angeles businessman active in the antiwar movement, put up most of the money for the film, described as a "big budget" production.

The producer is trying to withhold more detailed information about the production until shooting is completed in two or three weeks.

According to his press representative, Steve Jaffe, there have been rumors of Central Intelligence Agency interest in the project, and one crew member reported a CIA threat to sabotage the production.

Although no one has attempted to hit the [illegible] lot, the shots are being kept secret, and Freed guards on the set. One source reports that the company has already done some filming in Texas and Tulsa, Okla., which is doubling for Dallas in a number of scenes.

Jaffe refuses to disclose the contents of the film, but a novelization of the screenplay, by Freed and Lane, will soon be published. All parties agree it is "very close"—though not identical—to the final shooting script. The novel describes a complex assassination plot designed and executed by Texas oilmen, retired right-wing military personnel, CIA agents, anti-Castro Cubans and the Mafia.

ROBERT RYAN
Conspirator

no. Lee Harvey Oswald is only a decoy planted to divert investigators from the four real assassins; the murder of Oswald is planned in advance, and Jack Ruby is a member of the labyrinthine conspiracy network. The precise details of the film's plot cannot be verified, but Oswald is definitely a character.

Lancaster, Ryan and Geer play three of the high level conspirators. Freed and Lane wrote the film screenplay of "Executive Action" two years ago. Freed is also the author of "Inquest," a play about the espionage trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, and "A Jury in New Haven," a play about the Black Panther conspiracy trial.

Lane, author of "Rush to Judgment"—one of the sharpest and most controversial critiques of the Warren Commission report—supplied much research material for "Executive Action." Both authors traveled extensively, and talked to CIA informants and other witnesses while working on their script.

*N.Y. Times Serv.*

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VARIETY 6/6/73

## First Filming On Kennedy Killing

Hollywood, June 5.

Under a rare cloak of secrecy—purportedly due to possible FBI and CIA interference—production is underway on a film that will allege a conspiracy in President John F. Kennedy's death. Pic will be distributed by National General at the end of 1973.

Called "Executive Action," and presenting Robert Ryan, Burt Lancaster and Will Geer, film has two-to-four weeks of shooting remaining, but has been kept under an exceptional hush by National General and producer Edward Lewis, who has set up offices at 20th-Fox.

Lewis has refused this paper's calls. Film pressagent Steve Jaffe, in response to request for film info, said he's "not allowing anyone to know anything about the script. No one knows about the film and its contents."

He attributed this to the film being "intensely controversial in nature" and that the producer "doesn't want any attention to the product." He said his job at present is to withhold, not disseminate, information.

He said, "We have heard from different people that there has been concern by the CIA," but denied any such direct knowledge. A National General spokesman confirmed the fact that the film is currently shooting on location throughout Los Angeles. He said it is "a closed set—closed in terms of press information."

Screenplay was written by Dalton Trumbo, based on a story by Donald Freed. Asked the reason for the secrecy involved in the shooting, the spokesman said there are "things we want to hold back."

It was learned that part of the cast of "Executive Action" includes a double for John Kennedy and one for the wife of Gov. John Connally of Texas.